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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the impact of the BOUNCE BACK! Resiliency Program on teachers and students. The program teaches coping skills to students, 11-12 years old, to help them resist the use of substances and other risk-taking behaviors. The program contains five elements: (1) the core component of coping skills; (2) a supportive social skills program; (3) a SCARF classroom chapter, based on values of support, cooperation, acceptance, respect, and friendliness; (4) an anti-bullying program which includes coping strategies for bullying; and (5) a "Success Thinking" program. Core components of the program are based on four types of coping skills: optimistic thinking and humor, rational interpretation of events, normalizing, and help seeking and self-disclosure. Eight schools participated in the pilot study, which questioned whether the program could help students learn the BOUNCE BACK! acronym, increase students' coping skills, improve teacher resilience and counseling, and determine teacher satisfaction with the program. Results indicate that the BOUNCE BACK! Resiliency Program appears to be an effective and user-friendly program for teaching students strategies for coping with negative events in their lives. Teachers reported an increase in their coping skills and their skills in counseling students. (Contains 27 references, 4 tables, and 2 figures.) (JDM)

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The BOUNCE BACK! Resiliency Program: A Pilot Study

Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association annual conference, New Orleans, April 24th-28th, 2000

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Introduction

Resilience can be defined as the capacity, after encountering hardship, adversity or reversals in life, to cope with them and "BOUNCE BACK!" ie retain emotional well being in both the short term and long term. (Garmezy and Rutter, 1983). Students who can think and behave in a resilient manner are less likely to engage in harmful alternatives to coping such as substance abuse, and anti-social behaviour (Basic Behavioral Science task Force, 1996; Beardslee, 1990; Brooks, 1994; Compas, Hinden, & Gerhardt, 1995; Englander-Golden, Golden, Brookshire, Snow, Haag, & Chang, 1996; Rutter, 1987; Segal, 1986; Werner, 1992, 1996)

Risk Factors

Factors which place students at exceptional risk for developing harmful behavioural patterns are , for example, poverty, parental criminality, parental neglect, parental substance abuse, and parental psychiatric disorder, (Rutter (1987). However, cultural changes over the last two decades (eg Seligman, 1995) have meant that a significant number of children now experience events which are not necessarily atypical but which nonetheless have a strong negative impact on their mental health. Such experiences often lead them to use substances harmfully as a coping mechanism in the absence of awareness of other more adaptive and healthy coping strategies. Typical events would be transitions from primary school to secondary school, divorce, death, physical handicaps, chronic illness, mental illness, loss of a parent, parental separation, being bullied at school, loss of a friend, changed financial circumstances, and being socially excluded. There is increasing evidence that depression is on the increase in children, with the most recent estimate being that at least 9 % of the child population suffer from clinically significant depression, a major increase on figures from earlier years (Lewinshon, Rohde, Seeley, & Fischer, 1993). Seligman's (1995) research suggests an even higher prevalence rate and he has argued strongly that the difference is due to the fact that earlier cohorts expected to encounter hardship and diversity (eg war, poverty and neglect) and hence were taught to cope more effectively with it.

Protective Factors

Protective factors are those skills, traits, conditions, situations, and episodes which appear to alter or even reverse predictions of psychopathology or negative outcomes based on a child's "at-risk' status (Segal, 1986). Research into resiliency has identified many of those factors which appear to protect some children by making them more stress-resistant and helping them to develop strength, courage and positive health. This is in contrast to stress-absorbent children who demonstrate negative mental behaviours and are more prone to demonstrating a tendency towards depression, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts and actions, ongoing emotional distress and violent actions when they experience difficult, adverse, or distressing life events

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The Role of Schools in the Development of Student Resiliency

School systems have now begun to react to the research knowledge of protective factors in planning effective prevention programs with the aim of to promoting positive mental and physical behaviours to offset the development of personal and social problems such as harmful use of alcohol and drugs, depression, suicide, anti-social behaviours, and teenage pregnancy (Benard, 1998).

The research into factors which "protect students from short and long term negative outcomes after hardship and adversity offers two main directions for schools who want to develop resiliency in students.

1. The Environmental Approach

Firstly, schools can intervene by working with aspects of students' environment which have been shown to influence the development of resiliency.

The work of several researchers (eg Resnick and his colleagues (Resnick,Bearman, Blum, Bauman, Harris, Jones, Beuhring, Sieving, Shew, Ireland, Bearinger, & Udry, 1997; Sethi and Seligman,1993) has focused primarily on environmental factors which are protective, such as family-connectedness, school-connectedness, religious involvement, cultures of cooperation, and opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution. Fuller, McGraw, & Goodyear (1998) have recommended that schools focus on making improvements the aspect of "school-connectedness", by establishing structures and programs which:

- foster a sense of acceptance, belonging and fitting in
- ensure that students feel valued and supported
- establish positive and close relationships between students and individual teachers who believe in them
- provide opportunities for successful and meaningful participation
- reduce school bullying

2. The Personal Skills Approach

Secondly, schools can focus on teaching students personal "protective" personal skills as a core component of the curriculum. The work of researchers in this area has focused on personal qualities and competencies which are protective, such as success, mastery, social skills, optimistic thinking, self knowledge, a sense of humour, problem solving and planning skills, positive self perceptions and self-efficacy, goal setting, and stress management. (eg Seligman, 1995 Beardslee, 1990; Brooks, 1994; Compas, Hinden, & Gerhardt, 1995; Englander-Golden, Golden, Brookshire, Snow, Haag, & Chang, 1996; Masten, Garmezy, Tellegen, Pellegrini, Larkin, and Larsen (1988); Rutter, 1987; Segal, 1986; Werner, 1992, 1996). They argue that resiliency develops as children employ active ongoing attempts to organise and understand and deal with their experiences.

Ultimately a successful prevention program involves the provision and interaction of both environmental and personal components to foster resilience. For example, the development of coping skills can promote greater peer support as students also learn effective ways to help others as well as themselves. The teaching of social skills is a necessary part of peer-connectedness, but such programs are more successful when they are linked into structures such as peer tutoring, anti-bullying programs, pastoral care initiatives, and cooperative learning networks . Schools must build the personal and environmental attributes that serve as the key to healthy development.

The BOUNCE BACK! Resiliency Program

The BOUNCE BACK! Program is a resiliency program which focuses mainly on the teaching of coping skills as an antidote to harmful use of substances and other harmful risk-taking behaviour . The target group for this study was years 5 and 6 (ages 11-12) but modified versions of the program can be delivered at any level from Year 1 through to year 12

The core component of the BOUNCE BACK! Program is the acronym BOUNCE BACK! which is the "coat-hanger" for 10 coping statements. The expectation is that students "over learn" the acronym so that it becomes a cognitive prompt. Then, with the teacher, they work through the details of the coping strategies using cooperative learning activities, games, discussions, and concrete

materials. There is a special focus on humour both as a coping strategy in itself and as a unit of work (eg the study of cartoons, humorous writers and performers etc).

The program targets teacher welfare, teacher counselling, student welfare, peer support, and parent welfare. It is assumed that in teaching students to become more resilient, teachers themselves become more resilient and more able to counsel students. It isd also assumed that students who become more resilient are also more able to support classmates by the use of resilient skills.

The full and final BOUNCE BACK! Program will contain five elements:-

1. The core component of coping skills (BOUNCE BACK!)
2. A supportive social skills program (Based on the Friendly Kids Friendly Classrooms program (McGrath and Francey (1991))
3. A SCARF classroom charter (based on the values of Support, Cooperation, Acceptance, Respect, and Friendliness)
4. An anti-bullying program which includes coping strategies for bullying
5. A "Success Thinking" program (WINNERS)

However the core of the BOUNCE BACK! Program which was the focus of this study is the following acronym.

When things don't go as you want , or if you get "knocked down", remember that you can BOUNCE BACK! and be okay again

Bad times don't last and don't have to spoil other parts of your life .

Other people can support you if you talk to them

Unnecessary worry makes things worse.

Nobody is perfect.

Calculate your own "fair blame" and what is due to others or bad luck

Everybody experiences bad times , not just you.

Be positive, no matter how small the positives are, and find the laughter

Accept what you can't change.

Control your feelings and actions by controlling your thinking

Keep things in perspective.

This acronym is based on four types of coping skill, which are: -

- **Optimistic thinking and the Use of Humour**
  This coping skill comes from the research of Martin Seligman (1995). Optimistic thinking stresses a balanced view of causation, seeing bad events as temporary, identifying the smaller but positive aspects of negative events, and recognising that negative events do not necessarily negatively affect other areas of your life. Werner (1992, 1996) has also made reference to the healing power of "hope". As well, optimism also includes the ability to see and focus on a lighter side of a situation.

- **Rational interpretation of events**
  This set of coping skills is based on the CBT (Cognitive BehaviourTherapy) model of Albert Ellis (Bernard & Joyce, 1984; Ellis, 1988; Ellis & Bernard, 1983; Ellis & Harper, 1976). In particular, the skill as used here focuses on understanding that how you think affects how you feel and act, having realistic expectations of self and others, accepting

what can't be changed, problem solving instead of worrying, and keeping things in perspective.

- **Normalising**
  This coping skill is based on the standard counselling skill (eg Geldard, 1993) which encourages children to recognise that: -
  - It is normal in life to have some bad events and adversity and they are not the only people who experience hardship, loss, sadness, disappointments, reversals, setbacks and bad times.
  - It is normal and appropriate to temporarily feel sad, anxious, worried, disappointed etc when these things happen to them.
  - Such feelings are useful in that they motivate one to problem solve
  - Others survive bad events in their lives and they can too

- **Help seeking and self disclosure**
  Many research studies have stressed the strong relationship between self- disclosure and positive mental health. Resilience research has also stressed the protective factor of social support.

Strategies used to Teach the Acronym

The skills in the acronym are taught and discussed using a variety of cooperative learning activities and cooperative games such as the following:-

- To introduce the acronym, students worked in cooperative groups of three to make bouncing balls from borax, distilled water and PVA glue
- A cooperative Postbox activity was used with topics such as fear and courage and humour. Students work in groups of five. They individually answer five questions on the topic (eg what are you most frightened of).Then they cut their five answers up and "post" each answer in a postbox with the same number as the question. Then group one collects postbox one. They cooperatively sort them, categorise them, and then present the results in an entertaining way to the class. Group two does question two and so on.

Resource materials given to the teachers also included units of work on Friendship, Humour, Courage, and Support for others. These units were basically presented through cooperative activities and games. As well, music and cartoons used. Where possible the program was integrated with day-to-day classroom learning eg the bouncing balls which were made were used for bouncing experiments in Science and Maths, students wrote collaborative stories about "bouncing back" for literacy and so on.

The Research Questions Which Directed This Study

This project investigated the impact on teachers and students of the BOUNCE BACK! Resiliency Program. In particular, it sought answers to the following research questions:-

1. Can students learn and recall the acronym BOUNCE BACK! and the skills and understandings which are its foundation

2. Does the BOUNCE BACK! program:
   - increase the use of the coping skills by students in hypothetical discussions
   - increase the use of the coping skills by students in relation to their own negative situations

3.. Does the BOUNCE BACK! program:
   - improve teacher resilience
   - improve teacher counselling

4. Is the BOUNCE BACK! program perceived by teachers to be satisfactory ie user- friendly, easy to implement, philosophically acceptable and effective

The Methodology

The methodology used was a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative elements were:-

- Pre-program and post-program whole-class measures of student references to the coping skills in hypothetical discussions. Discussions were recorded, transcribed and analysed using NUDIST
- Post-program test scores on the learning and recall of the acronym BOUNCE BACK! using a paper and pencil test
- Pre-program and post-program self-ratings from each of the eight teachers to ascertain:-
  - Their perception of their counselling skills (Self-ratings from 1-10)

The more qualitative (or semi-qualitative) elements were :-

- Pre-program and post-program interviews with each of the eight teachers to determine:-
  - teacher satisfaction with the program (ease of teaching, usefulness, and preparedness to recommend it to others)
  - teachers' perceptions of their own coping skills
- Post-program interviews (recorded) with a focus group of four to six students from each class

Figure 1 outlines the stages of the study and Figure 2 summarises the measures used in the study.

Figure 1: An Overview of the Study

Stage 1	Eight schools were selected for the study by the REDEFs.
Stage 2	Pre-program data was collected:- • Teacher interviews and ratings • Student group discussions of hypothetical scenarios
Stage 3	The eight selected teachers attended a training session in the BOUNCE BACK! Resiliency program. All teachers were provided with a resource booklet and program resources/materials.
Stage 4	The teachers taught the BOUNCE BACK! Resiliency program to their students for fourteen weeks. Students received at least one formal session per week of an hour's duration plus incidental teaching across many curriculum areas such as Science, English, SOSE etc
Stage 5	Post-program data was collected:- • Teacher interviews and ratings • Student group discussions of hypothetical scenarios • Student quizzes • Student focus group discussions

Figure 2: Measures used in the Study

		Pre-program	Post-program
Teacher Measures	Teacher interviews	✓	✓
	Teacher self- ratings of counselling skills	✓	✓
	Teacher evaluations of BOUNCE BACK ! in terms of:- • Usefulness for students • It's effect on their own coping skills • Ease of teaching • Preparedness to recommend to others		✓
		Pre-program	**Post-program**
Student Measures	Whole-class discussion of hypothetical scenarios	✓	✓
	Student focus group discussion		✓
	Student quiz on the BOUNCE BACK! acronym		✓
	Teachers' observations of the spontaneous use of BOUNCE BACK! by students		✓

The Schools

Eight schools participated in the BOUNCE BACK! Pilot study. The schools were suggested by the Regional Drug Education Facilitators (RDEFs), who also selected and approached the classroom teachers on the recommendations of the principals. Most of the teachers were happy to be included However two were particularly nervous, and one was not overly enthusiastic and viewed the project as an imposition on her time.

The schools were randomly allocated a number from 1 to 8 and the teachers are also identified with the same number as their school number

Results of the Study

Student measures

1. **Student Quiz on the BOUNCE BACK! acronym**
   The quiz given to students required them to fill in the ten statements but the first word in each of the ten statements was given as a prompt.They were told that this was not a test of their

learning nor would it be marked. They were told to use the exact words if they could, but that responses in the spirit of the phrase were also acceptable.The quiz was assessed out of a total possible of 10 marks, with 1 mark assigned to each letter of the acronym. Accepted responses were an exact or very close recall of at least the main statement. Spelling was not taken into account. The average recall rate of the acronym was 83%. In general, students performed better on the statements connected to the word BOUNCE than those connected to the word BACK. This suggests that they did not learn the last 4 phrases as thoroughly as the first 6. Discussion with the class teachers suggests that the lack of time for the last four statements was the most likely reason for this. The mean recall rate for girls was higher than that for boys.This difference is not surprising, given girls' greater facility with language. More boys than girls had problems in the quizzes in regards to spelling and sentence/phrase construction than girls. As well, the socialisation of girls places greater stress on feelings, relationships and self-awareness, so it would be expected that they would be more focused on these concepts. Fourteen boys gave slightly "silly" responses, suggesting a mild discomfort with the personal nature of the program and its components. Focus group discussions (see later) also confirmed that a small number of boys were slightly uncomfortable with the personal nature of the program.

2. Whole-class Discussions of Hypothetical Scenarios

Before BOUNCE BACK! was implemented, and again at the end of the program, students took part in a whole-class discussion which was audiotaped. The focus of the discussion was on two situations which the class teachers read out to the class. The pre-program scenarios were different to the post-program ones. One pre-program scenario featured a female character called . "Sarah" who was embarrassed in front of the whole school. The other featured a male character called Brendan, who lost his best friend. Students were asked what they might do to help Sarah and Brendan cope with these difficulties. The first post-program scenario featured a male character called Nick" who messes up a comedy routine in the school concert, and the second featured a female character called "Anna" who is upset and jealous when her best friend's earlier best friend returns to their school. Analysis was carried out using NUDIST

Table 1 shows the comparison of the number of references made to each of the ten BOUNCE BACK! statements during the pre-program discussions and the post-program discussions.

Table 1 : References to BOUNCE BACK ! Concepts by Students In Discussions of the scenarios

	Before BOUNCE BACK!	After BOUNCE BACK!
B1 Bad times don't last	8	31
O Others can help you	42	33
U Unnecessary worry makes things worse	4	28
N Nobody is perfect	6	38
C1 Calculate fair blame	0	13
E Everyone has bad times	19	31
B2 Be positive and find the laughter	12	35
A Accept what can't be changed	17	34
C2 Control your thoughts	5	25
K Keep things in perspective	11	36

Table 2 shows this comparison in terms of the four categories of resilience skills which form the basis of the BOUNCE BACK! acronym. The greatest increase has occurred in references to rational thinking and optimism/laughter as coping strategies. In particular, there has been a marked increase in the use of the understanding that nobody is perfect and that you can control how you feel by how you think. As well, students made markedly more reference to the idea that bad times don't last. The only skill which was mentioned less in the post-program scenario was that of help-

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seeking. Given that this was the one mentioned most often by students in the pre-program scenarios, it appears that this one was already known and used by a number if students. As well, the use of many other strategies for coping has most likely displaced some of the use of help-seeking from adults as a strategy.

Table 2 :References to Specific Types of Resilience Skills During Discussions of Scenarios

	Before BOUNCE BACK!	After BOUNCE BACK!
Optimism and laughter ($B_{1,U}$, $B_{2,}C_1$)	24	107
Help-seeking (O)	42	43
Normalising (E)	19	31
Rational Thinking (N,A,C_2,K)	39	133
TOTALS	124	304

3. Student Focus Groups

Eight focus group discussions were conducted. The eight teachers were asked to select for each of the eight groups between four and six students from their grade who were reasonably articulate and not especially socially anxious. The discussions were relatively unstructured apart from one question about what they could remember about the program and another about what did they think of the program. Several key themes came out of the students' comments.

Enjoyment

All students indicated that they had enjoyed the BOUNCE BACK!program. These are some typical comments.

- *It didn't feel like we were really working*
- *Doing BOUNCE BACK was not like doing work. It was fun and we did lots of things*
- *BOUNCE BACK is about playing games, having fun and not feeling sad*

Use of BOUNCE BACK! in Students' Own Lives

Many students made reference to their own use of the skills with some of their own issues. These are some examples of such comments.

- *I use BOUNCE BACK! to remember that things can get better even when things are really bad*
- *Usually I don't know how to handle it (parents' separation) so I take it out on other people but now I am trying not to*
- *I think I'll do better without feeling sad*
- *I usually feel really bad if people fight, especially mum and dad, but I know it's not my fault so I say BOUNCE BACK and I remember to feel good about me*
- *I liked it because you learned how to control your feelings and not feel bad.*
- *It helped me with a few things like the dog's dying and not having money for things*

Generalisation of BOUNCE BACK! to the Family Context

Many students talked about how they had discussed or used BOUNCE BACK! in the context of their family. These are some examples.

- *Like when my sister started work and was very nervous, I could say things to help her*
- *I liked talking about the same things with my family*
- *My brother teases me all the time but BOUNCE BACK gave me some things to say and to think and so now he shuts up for a few days*
- *We learned these new words and some positive meanings and I say them a lot and taught my mum*
- *I told mum and she tells us to BOUNCE BACK when we are sad*

- *I talked with mum about this and she reckons it would have helped her with Dad and stuff*
- *I have talked to my dad about this stuff*

Safety and Self-disclosure

On the whole, students did not appear to feel threatened by the personal aspects of the program. However, there were a few comments from boys which suggested that a very small number found it "unmanly" to talk about these things and these are listed in the next section. Most students found the opportunity to talk, discuss and listen was invaluable. Here are a selection of comments.

- *It's kind of easier to say things after someone has already said what happened to them*
- *It was good listening to what everybody said*
- *We didn't have to say much personal stuff if we didn't want to (although another student said "I didn't like having to say something when the teacher asked me a question")*
- *It was ace to talk about things. It was like I wasn't the only dumb one.*
- *It brought up pain and memories but it was good to get it out of my system*

Peers

There were a few mentions of discussing or using the skills with friends eg

- The best stuff was talking to my friends about BOUNCE BACK at lunchtime

Negative Aspects

There were very few negative comments . These were the main ones noted.

- We didn't like writing things down
- It was too girly. They want boys to cry and stuff
- This stuff isn't very important
- It's better to talk than write

Teacher Measures

Teacher Interviews Before BOUNCE BACK!

The eight class teachers were all interviewed individually prior to beginning teaching BOUNCE BACK!. They were again interviewed after the program had been implemented.
Here is a summary of their responses to a series of structured questions.

Question One

"Think about a time when you had a difficult period in your teaching career. Examples might be:-

- *not getting promotion*
- *having a parent make a complaint*
- *not getting along with a colleague.*

You do not need to give me details of the difficulties if you do not wish to do so, but I would like you to tell me some of the ways in which you coped with that difficult time. Obviously you would have attempted to solve the problem that you had, but I am particularly interested in how you coped mentally and emotionally rather than the ways in which you attempted to solve the actual problem.

- *How did you manage your negative feelings then ?*
- *How did you manage to stop it from crushing you ?*

All of the teachers responded that they had got through the difficult period using a mixture of positive and negative strategies eg:-

- Denial ("I'm a great one for pretending it didn't happen")
- Being realistic (eg"It's not my fault")
- Normalising (eg "these things happen")
- Staying positive (eg "[this situation] does not mean I am a bad teacher")
- Five of the teachers reported undertaking some physical activity to help them cope, including yoga, walking, sport.
- Two teachers said that it was important for them to be proactive rather than waiting for someone else to fix their problem.

- Medical interventions eg prescription medications and psychiatric help)
- Legal assistance
- Many reported confiding in other colleagues or senior staff
- Overall, once they had resolved the issue, most of the teachers report taking the problem and its consequences on as a learning experience.

Question Two

The teachers were then asked,

"Could you now repeat the same process of analysis with a time when an aspect of your personal life was not working out well eg difficulties in a relationship, problems with a family member, with house-building, with finances etc. Don't tell me what the difficulty was, but again, could you tell me:-

- *How did you manage your negative feelings ?*
- *How did you manage to stop it from crushing you ?*

- All eight teachers responded that they had a much more difficult time coping with personal difficulties than with professional ones.
- Overall they found it more difficult to use helpful self talk, whilst those who did try to use self talk found it harder to convince themselves of what they were saying.
- Whilst some of the teachers had used medical and / or counselling services or prayer to help cope, most of them felt the difficulty was still unresolved, but had faded in intensity over time.
- Most of the teachers reported putting their energies into their work during the difficult time or emotionally detaching from the situation, but one teacher, who needed to take leave as a result of her personal situation felt that she still had a burden of grief many years after the incident.
- Generally the teachers reported that they were less free to discuss the situation with close friends or family for a variety of reasons, and that their inability to cope with personal situations made them feel incompetent to varying degrees.
- One teacher found it was essential to smile, and act as if nothing was happening so as not to destroy other aspects of her life, and when the acute period had passed she felt it essential to be able to forgive the other person in order to get on with her life.

Question Three

How skilled do you believe you are at counselling students who experience personal or family problems or who are trying to deal with distressing events in their lives such as parental loss or separation?

- All the teachers reported that they felt more able to help other people – particularly their students – come to terms with difficult situations than they were able to help themselves.
- In further discussion, three of the teachers felt that to some degree their counselling of students was fraudulent because they could not personally believe the strategies they advised students to use.

Question Four

Can you tell me the main ways in which you counsel your students who are unhappy, stressed out or worried, or who have suffered a loss or distressing event in their life, such as a parent's death or parental separation?

- *What do you say to them ?*
- *How do you help them to deal with their negative feelings?*

- All teachers had developed strategies to give students opportunities to talk about issues, and all teachers reported recognising changes in individual student's behaviours to which they had responded by quietly or subtly asking the student if anything was wrong (or, if everything was okay).
- Many of the teachers suggested to their students that the students talk to a parent/ friend or appropriate person
- Five of the teachers suggested the students undertook some physical activity.
- All the teachers felt that it was important to make the child realise it was not the child's fault, particularly where a death or divorce had happened

- Several teachers felt that encouraging the student to use positive self talk was a way for the student to cope with distressing situations.
- Four of the teachers felt it was extremely important for the students to "acknowledge" the existence of negative feelings, and two also felt it was important for the students to be able to express those in a safe setting.
- Only one teacher reported having to deal with any mandatory reporting cases, which she felt very uncomfortable about reporting, especially when the students had confided in her. The issue of students confiding in teachers was a concern to most of the teachers, in terms of distress at potentially having to break a child's confidences and /or giving mixed messages about appropriate actions.
- Interestingly, only one teacher mentioned feeling comfortable about referring onto a health professional when she felt unskilled in counselling her students.
- Another concern was the issue of physical contact. Half the teachers wanted to hug distressed children but felt that this would be viewed as inappropriate. One placed her hand on her distressed student's shoulder, while others felt just sitting close to the students was the most appropriate "contact".
- Five of the teachers reported that they often use variants on student experiences or crises to form the basis of class discussions about how to deal with situations. These teachers felt that the discussion scenarios used in the BOUNCE BACK! Program were particularly useful as these were structured forms of the activities that they had been using.

2. Teacher Interviews After BOUNCE BACK!

After the teachers had taught the BOUNCE BACK! program, the research assistant returned to the schools to once again interview the teachers. In the intervening months, the teachers and the research assistant had maintained contact and had all met up at a training day. Thus, the teachers knew the research assistant better, and there was a higher level of trust and personal engagement during the interviews. Whilst the pre program interviews lasted from 10-20 minutes, some of the post program interviews went for well over an hour.

Question One

How skilled are you now at counselling students who experience personal or family problems or who are trying to deal with distressing events in their lives such as parental loss or separation?

In the pre-program interviews, teachers had been asked to give themselves a rating from 1 to 10 of their counselling skills. They were asked to do this again in the post-program interview. Table 3 shows the comparison between the pre-program and post-program ratings. The results indicate that the average level of perceived counselling competence had increased markedly from 4.8 to 7.7. Seven of the eight of the teachers rated themselves as much more skilled at counselling after they had implemented it the BOUNCE BACK! program. The eighth teacher had rated her counselling competency fairly high (a rating of 8) before the program was taught and did not increase this after implementing the program.

Table 3 : Teacher's Self-ratings of their Skills in Counselling Students

Teacher	Before Bounce Back!	After Bounce Back!
Tchr 1	5	8
Tchr 2	2	6
Tchr 3	5	7
Tchr 4	8	8
Tchr 5	3	5
Tchr 6	6	9
Tchr 7	3	9
Tchr 8	6	9
Average	**4.8**	**7.6**

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- In discussion, seven of the eight teachers felt that they had improved in counselling their students as a result of teaching the BOUNCE BACK! Program.
- Whilst not all had encountered a situation which required them to counsel a student since teaching BOUNCE BACK!, there was an overwhelming sense that they felt that they had more confidence and skills to deal effectively with typical student's situations eg "BOUNCE BACK! has given me a format to follow, and things to focus on and relate to."
- The overall impression from the teachers was not that they would vastly change their ways of dealing with these issues - but that they would be very much more confident in their dealings with their students, and that they could suggest / remind their students of the BOUNCE BACK! message Here is an example. "I discuss their feelings with them, especially that [in the case of family breakdown] it's not their fault. I talk about what the situation means and how they can minimise their sadness by trying to think of ways to make the most of a situation, such as they can now have time with both their parents, where their parents aren't fighting. I get the students to think of solutions, how can they make themselves feel better, and what can they do to make themselves happier. I get *them* to think of solutions."

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Table 4 below relates to the next five questions.

Table 4 : Teacher's Evaluations of the Effectiveness of the BOUNCE BACK! Program

Question 1.	**How much has the teaching of the BOUNCE BACK! program improved your own skills of coping with personal or professional difficulties ?**			
	A great deal 2	Considerably 3	A little 3	Not at all 0
Question 2.	**How easy did you find the BOUNCE BACK! Program to teach ?**			
	Extremely easy 5	Quite easy 2	Reasonably easy 1	Not easy at all 0
Question 3	**How useful did you find the BOUNCE BACK! Program for students ?**			
	Extremely useful 5	Quite useful 2	Reasonably useful 1	Not useful at all 0
Question 4	**Would you recommend the BOUNCE BACK! Program to colleagues?**			
	Yes, strongly 6	Yes, Moderately 2	Maybe 0	No 0
Question 5.	**Have you observed students using any part of the Program spontaneously ?**			
	Yes, often 3	Yes, sometimes 5	No 0	

Question Three

How much do you feel you have improved in how you deal with your own stress or difficult times, since teaching beginning BOUNCE BACK! in your class room?

Teachers were asked to rate their improvement in coping as either:-

- A great deal
- Considerably
- A little
- Not at all

Table 4 shows the number of teachers selecting each category. Five of the teachers perceived that they had improved a lot in terms of their own coping skills, and 2 felt they had improved a little. One of the teachers said she had improved only a little, "not because BOUNCE BACK! was not effective, but because I felt that I had a lot of those strategies, but I didn't have a name to them. I think what BOUNCE BACK! has done for me is clarified a lot of the issues. I've been able to name things and make my self talk more specific." When questioned further about their improvements, the teachers generally felt that they had used the acronym in their own dealings with difficult situations. Some of the teachers described using particular statements in their own lives. They had been able to identify clearly the areas in their own style which were not so strongly resilient, and effectively target these weaknesses with appropriate BOUNCE BACK! statements. One teacher said "I'm more likely to focus on the positive and use B1. Also I'm not so hard on myself if something goes wrong (N)"Six teachers reported also using the statements with partners, children and friends outside of work. Six teachers reported having defused tense situations at home by thinking about BOUNCE BACK! statements before, or instead of, criticising others. One teacher, who reported improving her coping skills considerably, had found through linking BOUNCE BACK! with other coping strategies, that she was able to re-evaluate a painful situation from her past, and join a self help/ support group. She felt that she is coming to terms with her situation, and is now also becoming more open to and confident in assisting students and colleagues in need.

Question Four

Which parts of the program have you mainly used when undertaking counselling or dealing with student behaviour and in what situations?

Teachers reported using a variety of BOUNCE BACK! concepts in their counselling of students. Many teachers reported having success with minor issues using some of the humorous aspects of the program. Other teachers had significant success in their counselling using B2 (Be positive and find the laughter), O (Others can help you) and K (keep things in perspective). One teacher reported using C ("Calculate fair blame") for a student who was fighting with his father, and for a student who wagged, U (Unnecessary worrying makes things worse) for a students who was worried about camp, B1(Bad times don't last) and O (Others can help you) for a student whose parents are having difficulties, N(nobody is perfect) all the time for kids who make errors or put themselves down" .

Question Five

Overall, how easy did you find the program to teach?

Teachers were asked to select a category to indicate their answer. They had the choice of

- Extremely easy
- Quite easy
- Reasonably easy
- Not easy at all

Table 4 shows the number of teachers who selected each category. Five teachers found the program extremely easy to teach, two found it quite easy and one found it reasonably easy. It would appear that the BOUNCE BACK! program is very teacher-friendly.

Question Six

Overall, how useful did you find the program?

Again, teachers were asked to select a category to indicate their answer. They had the choice of

- Extremely useful
- Quite useful
- Reasonably useful
- Not useful at all

Table 4 shows the number of teachers who selected each category. Five teachers found the program extremely useful to teach, two found it quite useful and one found it reasonably useful. It would appear that the BOUNCE BACK! program is perceived by the teachers as a useful program for students.

Question Seven

Would you recommend the program to colleagues?

Teachers were asked the level to which they would be prepared to recommend BOUNCE BACK! to colleagues. They were asked to select from:-

- Yes, strongly
- Yes, moderately
- Maybe
- No

Table 4 shows the number of teachers who selected each category. Six teachers reported that they would strongly recommend the program to colleagues and two said they would moderately recommend it. No teacher said "Maybe" or "No". This clearly demonstrates that the program was acceptable and satisfactory to the teachers, as well as being useful for students and user-friendly for teachers. Seven teachers reported that they would they would be definitely using it regularly in their teaching.

- "It was wonderful. We plan to use it across the school next year. It's firmly in our welfare plan"
- "We are planning to introduce the acronym to all the year 5 students next year, and then continue work on the statements with the kids, and introduce the applications when they are in grade six"
- "I will use it everyday in incidental ways, and weekly in explicit BOUNCE BACK! time"
- "It was such a fantastic program, I've really loved it".

Only one teacher was not highly supportive of the program. She had been reluctant about being involved in the trial, and felt BOUNCE BACK! was an imposition on her teaching program. In all areas she was less enthusiastic and supportive than the other teachers. This teacher had also rated herself pre-program as being already quite skilled at counselling.

Question Eight

Have you observed students using any part of the program spontaneously in the classroom or playground?

Teachers were asked to select from

- Yes, often
- Yes, sometimes
- No

The number of teachers selecting each category is shown in table 4. All eight teachers reported seeing students using the program spontaneously. Of the eight, three reported observing this often and five reported observing this sometimes. Slightly more girls than boys had been observed using the skills but that boys had also used them. One teacher said she had "heard them talking to other children in the playground using the acronym and sub-statements".

Question Nine

Were there any positive or negative parental reactions

Only four teachers had had any reactions from parents, but these had all been positive
Some parents had written appreciative letters to the school. Others indicated strong interest and gave positive feedback to the BOUNCE BACK! newsletters sent home throughout the program. One teacher reported that parents "were positive and those who spoke to me had observed BOUNCE BACK! principles being used at home".

Discussion and Conclusions

The research questions which directed this study can now be answered as follows

Can students learn and recall the acronym BOUNCE BACK! and the skills which are its foundation?	Yes, students learned the acronym and were able to recall it with an average 83% recall rate after only 14 weeks of the BOUNCE BACK! program.
Did BOUNCE BACK! increase the use of the coping skills by students in hypothetical discussions ?	Yes, and in particular it increased the application of rational thinking and optimism
Did BOUNCE BACK! increase the use of the coping skills by students in relation to their own negative situations ?	Yes, many students used the coping skills in their own lives and, unexpectedly, in their family situations with other family members.
Did BOUNCE BACK! improve teacher resilience ?	Yes, all teachers reported improvement in their coping skills, and five of the eight reported a great deal of improvement
Did BOUNCE BACK! improve teacher counselling ?	Yes, seven of the eight teachers reported marked improvement in their counselling skills. The eighth had reported that she was already very skilled before the program began.
Was the program perceived by teachers to be satisfactory ie user-friendly, easy to implement, philosophically acceptable and effective ?	Yes, all eight teachers found the program to be useful, user-friendly and acceptable. Six of the eight assessed it as a very effective and desirable program for students which they plan to continue using with students. The other two assessed it as effective and useful.

Conclusions

The BOUNCE BACK ! resiliency program appears to be an effective and user-friendly classroom program for teaching students strategies for coping with negative events in their lives. It also appears to enhance teachers' own coping skills as they teach it as well as their skills in counselling students. Unexpectedly, it may also offer an opportunity for parents and students to enhance their coping skills together. Future research into the program should investigate:-

- Whether the use of the BOUNCE BACK! program reduces the longer term likelihood of students using drugs as a coping strategy later in their lives
- Whether the BOUNCE BACK! program leads to more effective peer support, which in turn may lead to a reduced likelihood of depression and drug taking behaviour

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